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SUBJECT: Morales Continues to Attempt to Derail Copenhagen Accord

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REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Declaring the Copenhagen UN climate change summit a failure, Bolivian President Morales announced he will convoke the first "People's World Conference on Climate Change and the Mother Earth" in Cochabamba April 20-22 -- coinciding with Earth Day. The conference's stated objective is to improve the position of social movements in the climate change process and develop an alternative work plan to take to the United Nations. As one of only five countries that did not sign the Copenhagen Accord (besides Tuvalu, Venezuela, Sudan, and Cuba), the Bolivian government hopes to raise doubts about the ability of the UN process to advance the climate change agenda and address the concerns of the world's poorest nations. More fundamentally, Morales views climate change as a vehicle for raising his and Bolivia's international political stature, especially among sympathetic anti-globalization groups. End summary.

¶2. (C) President Morales seemed to revel in his high-profile opposition to the UN process at the Copenhagen summit, ridiculing developed nations' proposals, making extraordinary demands for reparations and aid, and alienating the conference organizers and most delegations. Danish Ambassador to Bolivia Morten Elkjaer told us Morales canceled most of his bilateral program at the last moment, including meetings with clean energy firms, sustainable energy experts, and leading Danish businesses and labor federations. Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen spent an unpleasant 30 minutes with Morales, Ambassador Elkjaer said, during which Morales thanked him for bilateral aid (Denmark provides Bolivia approximately \$30 million a year in aid), but refused to engage on climate change issues. The Danes said they are "fed up" with Bolivia and the ALBA countries, who continue to mount legal and propaganda arguments against the Copenhagen Accord, but that they will continue to consult with their European Union partners on ways to influence the GOB position.

¶3. (C) Chinese DCM in La Paz, Huang Yazhong, told the Charge that he has raised the Copenhagen Accord twice with Bolivian MFA Multilateral Affairs director MarC-a Cecilia ChacC3n, urging the GOB to rethink its radical opposition to the deal. Noting he had made little progress, the Chinese diplomat suggested that further engagement was pointless and argued that it is up to Brazil to bring around Bolivia and the other ALBA countries. Brazilian officials told us Bolivia refused to adopt Brazil's position on Copenhagen at a November 26 meeting in Manaus organized by President Lula da Silva. Still, Itamaraty official Marcel Biato (and future Brazilian Ambassador to La Paz) said Brazil will continue to press Bolivia on Copenhagen, hoping that Bolivia's

isolation on this issue will eventually bring it around.

¶4. (C) Gisela Ulloa, a member of Bolivian delegations to earlier COP meetings (but not COP-15, where she represented Papua New Guinea and the Coalition for First Nations) told us the GOB's position is aimed at creating an alternative development model consistent with Morales's anti-capitalist philosophy. In addition to demanding enormous reparations from developed nations, the GOB opposes using markets as a mechanism to reduce emissions. Ulloa suggested that Morales recognizes Bolivia will not be included in the deliberations of the major players and is keen to create an alternative forum where he can style himself as the leader of anti-globalization groups and other social movements. MAS Senator Ana Maria Romero added that Morales sees environmental issues as one area where he can carve out an international identity independent from that of his close ally, President Hugo Chavez. She recounted to us that an animated Morales told her he was surrounded by well-wishers in Copenhagen urging him "not to abandon them," while Chavez was alone in the corner.

¶5. (C) Many Bolivians are quick to observe that Morales's climate change campaign is about enhancing his global stature, not about the environment. Former Morales Production Minister and MAS replacement (suplente) Senator Javier Hurtado said there is a huge gap between Morales' strident, pro-environmental rhetoric in international fora and his domestic emphasis on industrialization as the key to development. The foundation of this effort is large-scale natural gas, iron, and lithium production projects, enterprises that have historically proven extremely damaging to the environment. In fact, the Inter-American

Development Bank has presented a report to the GOB that details the serious potential for environmental damage in extracting lithium.

¶6. (C) Comment: Bolivia is already suffering real damage from the effects of global warming, but Morales seems to prefer to score rhetorical points rather than contribute to a solution. This radical position won him plaudits from anti-globalization groups, but has alienated many developed nations and most of Bolivia's neighbors .. Our assessment is that Bolivia remains beyond reach on Copenhagen, at least until Morales sees the limits of his approach. End comment.
Creamer